

CURRICULUM VITA & BIO: [updated 5-4-2011]

ROBERT A. RUHNKE C.SS.R.
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PROFESSIONAL EDUCATION

1986 DOCTOR OF MINISTRY, SOUTHERN METHODIST UNIVERSITY, DALLAS TX
Major area of study: Theology / Adult Education

1975 MASTER OF THEOLOGY, ST. THOMAS UNIVERSITY, HOUSTON TX
Major area of study: Theology

1967 BACHELOR OF DIVINITY, IMMACULATE CONCEPTION SEM, OCONOMOWOC WI
Major area of study: Theology

1963 BACHELOR OF ARTS, IMMACULATE CONCEPTION SEMINARY, OCONOMOWOC WI
Major area of study : Philosophy

PROFESSIONAL TRAINING EXPERIENCES:

- 2007. Harville Hendrix. A weekend of study of Imago Theory and Dialogue directed by Harville Hendrix and Helen Hunt
- 1988. Edwin Friedman. A weekend study of *Generation to Generation* directed by Ed Friedman.
- 1979. Harville Hendrix. Weekend of lectures by H. Hendrix in 1979, additional lectures after that.
- 1979. Divorce ministry/Annulments/etc. Two week course at Notre Dame University.
- 1978-Present. Beginning Experience. Team leader and chaplain for weekends.
- 1976-1984. Engaged Encounter. Creator/Director of the program in Houston TX
- 1974-1976. Marriage Encounter. Functioned as “team priest” and regional leader.

CURRENT POSITIONS:

1998-Present. Director of Marriage Preparation Resources. Since the publication of the 3rd edition of *For Better and For Ever*, Rob is available for:

- training and enrichment of Sponsor Couples
- consultation with dioceses and local churches about setting up the *For Better and For Ever* program using mentor/sponsor couples
- clergy education (on topics related to marriage preparation)
- presentations and retreats (at retreat houses and local churches) which focus on building more intimate and Christ centered marriages.

In 1997, Rob began using the Internet as a ministerial tool:

- His web page at (<http://www.marriagepreparation.com>) makes him available for questions about marriage preparation and professional services to dioceses and local churches and anyone looking for information.

PREVIOUS PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE:

1996-1998. Director of the Office of Development for the Redemptorists of the Vice Province of New Orleans.

1986-1995. Formation Director for Redemptorist theology level seminarians in San Antonio TX. During this time he authored the 2nd edition of *For Better and For Ever* in 1989.

1983-1986. Pastor of parishes in Houston TX and Baton Rouge LA. He completed the requirements for the Doctor of Ministry degree from Southern Methodist University in 1986.

1976-1983. Executive Director of the Family Life Office in the Diocese of Galveston-Houston. He gave special attention to the design and development of programs for engaged couples, married couples and families, and those suffering the difficulties of divorce. Beginning with the vision of Bishop Edmond Carmody, Rob collaborated with married couples in Houston to author *For Better and For Ever* which is used in parishes throughout the U.S. and Canada.

1967-1975. Associate pastor, specializing in Youth Ministry and Marriage Preparation in St. Louis, San Antonio and Houston.

MEMBERSHIPS:

- National Association of Catholic Family Life Ministers. (1980 – present.)
- National Association for Relationship and Marriage Education. (2011 -)

PUBLICATIONS:

- “I do: Changing the way Christian couples prepare for marriage.” Hope, Quarterly magazine of Redemptorist Denver Province Mission Advancement Ministry, Summer 2009.
http://www.marriagepreparation.com/news_information.htm#August_1,_2009
- Ruhnke, Robert. “Pastoral Issues of Marrying & Tips for Pastoral Ministers”, Presented at National Association of Catholic Family Life Ministers, St. Paul MN, June 26, 2009.
http://www.marriagepreparation.com/Pastoral_issues_of_marrying_NACFLM.htm
- *For Better and For Ever*, Covenant edition, October 2007.
- “New Approach to Marriage Preparation,” *Redemptorists In Action*, Vol.25,#7,Sept2001.
- “Marriage Preparation Programs: Are They Working?,” *The Living Light*, USCC, 2000.
- *For Better and For Ever* (3rd ed.), San Antonio TX, Marriage Preparation Resources, 1997.
- *The Sponsor Couple Program for Christian Marriage Preparation*, Liguori MO, Liguori Pub., 1989.
- *For Better and For Ever*, Liguori MO, Liguori Publications, 1981.

PRESENTATIONS:

- Januar 21-23, 2011. Hattiesburg MS. Friday AM - Presentation to clergy regarding establishing and sustaining the use of For Better and For Ever in their parishes. Friday PM – Presentation/conversation with Youth Group regarding learning and practicing relationship skills while dating as a key element of marriage preparation. Saturday – Full day of Training for “new” sponsor couples & updating for experience sponsor couples.
- Oct 23, 2010. Greensburg PA. Presentation to diocesan gathering on Marriage: Love and Life in the Divine Plan; followed by afternoon with experienced sponsor couples to get additional feedback.

- Workshop Presenter “Training Sponsor/Mentor Couples” at SmartMarriages Conference 2010 Orlando FL.
- May 1, 2010. Presentation for Diocese of San Bernardino CA to folks involved in marriage preparation. This was opportunity to use the material I presented at NACFLM workshop in 2009, and see how it would “work.”
- Workshops for pastors and lay leaders for the Diocese of Regina in Canada on November 6th & 7th, 2009. John Mungham and his wife Jocelyne came from Calgary AB to help with these workshops designed to answer any questions they might have about using *For Better and For Ever* in their parishes.
- Workshop for Experienced Sponsor Couples to help with project of establishing diocesan trainer for the Diocese of San Angelo TX. These sessions were repeated in three different area of the diocese on 3 separate weekends in September 2009.
- Workshop Presenter “Training Sponsor/Mentor Couples” at SmartMarriages Conference 2009 Orlando FL.
- Workshop Presenter “Pastoral Issues of Marrying & Tips for Pastoral Ministers”, Presented at National Association of Catholic Family Life Ministers, St. Paul MN, June 26, 2009.
- Sponsor Couple Training and meetings with Catechetical Staff. January 2009, San Bernardino CA
- Workshop Presenter “Training Sponsor/Mentor Couples” at SmartMarriages Conference 2008 San Francisco, 2007 Denver, 2006 Atlanta, 2005 Dallas, 2004 Dallas, 2003 Reno, 2002 Washington DC.
- Presenter, Sponsor Couple Training 2008: Albuquerque NM, San Angelo TX, Evansville IN, San Bernardino CA, Houston TX, Pittsburgh PA, Laredo TX.
- Presenter, Clergy Continuing Education Day, Diocese of El Paso TX. “The Pastoral Challenge of Marriage Preparation & How Married Couple Can Help.” October 2, 2007.
- Presenter, Sponsor Couple Training 2007: Raleigh NC, San Angelo TX, El Paso TX, Harrow OT Canada, Odessa TX, Ashtabula OH, Bowling Green KY, San Antonio TX, Beaumont TX, Houston TX, Atlanta GA, Chapel Hill NC, Calgary AB Canada, Guam USA, Hawaii.
- Presenter, Sponsor Couple Training 2006: Lytle TX, Sweeny TX, El Paso TX, Castroville

TX, Greenwood IN, Houston TX, Ann Arbor MI, Plantersville TX, Baytown TX, Austin TX, Rolla MO, Richmond TX, Salt Lake City UT, San Antonio TX, Scottsdale AZ.

- Presenter, Sponsor Couple Training 2005: Tulsa OK, Atlanta GA, Owensboro Ky, Austin TX, Rapid City SD, Victoria BC, El Paso TX, Evansville IN.
- Keynote Speaker & Presenter, "Marriage Preparation: Dealing with new challenges." Owensboro KY, Clergy Study Day, Diocese of Owensboro, September 13, 2005.
- Workshop Presenter, "For Better and For Ever and Mentor Training." Strengthening Marriage in Nebraska Conference, Lincoln NE, March 5, 2005
- Retreat Director, "Personal Spirituality in the 21st century." St. Catherine of Siena, Parish Staff retreat, Austin TX August 2-4, 2004.
- Keynote Speaker, "Marriage in the 21st century." New Orleans LA, Diocesan Conference for marriage enrichment. February 28, 2004.
- Keynote Speaker, "Intimacy/Spirituality and Marriage." Calgary AB, Diocesan Conference for couples involved in the ministry of marriage preparation, Diocese of Calgary, February 21-23, 2003.
- Workshop Presenter, "Marriage Preparation: What your parish can do." Beaumont TX, Parish Ministries Day, Diocese of Beaumont, September 2001.
- Presenter, "9 Days of Reflection on Marriage," State College PA, Our Lady of Victory Parish, October 14-22, 2000.
- Keynote Speaker & Presenter, "Marriage Preparation: Dealing with new challenges." Banff AB, Clergy Study Days, Diocese of Calgary, October 2-6, 2000.
- Presenter, Sponsor Couple Training 2000-2001, Dioceses of: Agana GU, San Bernardino CA, Calgary AB, Winnipeg ON, Tulsa/Oklahoma City OK, Dubuque/Davenport IA, Youngstown/Columbus OH, El Paso/Austin/Houston/San Angelo/Beaumont TX, Little Rock AR, Memphis TN, Pittsburgh/Greensburg/Altoona-Johnstown PA, Evansville IN, Baton Rouge LA.
- Task Force Member/author of *Marriage Guidelines for Dioceses of Texas*, Austin TX, Texas Catholic Conference, September 1994.

PERSONAL BIO:

Rev. Robert A. Ruhnke, C.S.S.R., D. Min., is a member of the Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer (Redemptorists) and was ordained a Catholic priest in 1966. In 1967 he became involved in the design and implementation of marriage preparation programs for couples preparing for marriage in the Catholic Church. In 1975, as Family Life Director for the Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston, he began to train married couples to function as “sponsors” (mentors) for couples preparing for marriage. Rob has served as a Pastor for parishes in Texas and Louisiana, and as a Formation Director for theology level seminarians.

In 1996 he began Marriage Preparation Resources (www.marriagepreparation.com) to:

- make himself available as a consultant to dioceses & churches who want to set up the *For Better and For Ever* marriage preparation program.
- plan and schedule workshops for the training and enrichment of “sponsor couples.”
- make himself available for presentations/workshops for clergy concerning marriage preparation and marriage enrichment.
- make himself available “on line” to assist those seeking information about Christian marriage and other personal/faith concerns and questions.

Rob believes that healthy spirituality is the result of giving consistent attention to relationship with God, with other persons, and with one’s self. Living in community with other Redemptorists, daily prayer, investment in relationships with good friends, a healthy diet, regular exercise, and serving the needs of others are all key elements of his spirituality. His hobbies include biking and photography. He lives in San Antonio, Texas.